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After the Madrid Summit:

Parliamentary Ratification of NATO Enlargement

by Sean Kay and Hans Binnendijk

Conclusions

- The prospects are reasonably good that all 16 NATO nations will eventually ratify the NATO accession protocols for new members. However, it may be difficult to meet the informal goal of April 1999 for new members' full admission into NATO.
- For parliamentary ratification to move in a timely manner, the accession negotiations between NATO and invited countries will have to be completed quickly—perhaps by December 1997.
- Six European nations, for different reasons, may require a special effort to ensure ratification.
- The process would be enhanced by early U.S. Senate ratification.
- Progress in the NATO-Russia Charter and enlargement costs are likely to be the two major issues of contention in parliaments.

Setting the Pace and Tone of Ratification

After the Madrid NATO Summit in July, public attention will quickly shift to ratification of accession protocols for countries invited to negotiate membership in NATO. An informal target date for the entrance of new members into the Alliance has been set for April 1999, NATO's 50th anniversary. While enlargement will probably be ratified by the NATO parliaments, it faces difficult hurdles and may not be completed by April 1999.

Most NATO countries currently indicate a strong hope that the U.S. Senate will move first to ratify new members joining NATO. Since the Europeans are likely to wait, the U.S. Senate will have to ratify by no later than the spring of 1998 if the other NATO parliaments are to have sufficient time to finish their own ratification procedures with a view towards completion in April 1999. Any prolonged Senate debate which delays ratification could prompt similar delays in European parliaments which will be watching the pace and tone of the U.S. discussion closely. The U.S. Congress has indicated interest in enlargement. For example, in 1996 the 104th Congress adopted the NATO Enlargement Facilitation Act with over 80 percent support in both houses. However, the various resolutions of congressional support have been non-binding and there has yet to be a substantive public debate. Getting not only the required 2/3 majority in the Senate, but also the support of the House of Representatives for funding the costs of integrating new members into NATO could require some skillful, yet time-consuming negotiations. If the process is delayed and carries over into the 1998 congressional election calendar, the timetable for NATO enlargement may face a serious obstacle in the United States.

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States Where Ratification May Undergo Difficulty

While it is difficult to predict what the political climate will be, it is possible to identify some of the major issues and potential hurdles likely to affect enlargement ratification in the NATO countries. As the accompanying table demonstrates, NATO enlargement is likely to proceed in a relatively straight-forward manner in Canada, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom. However, there are six European countries in which ratification may have difficulties due to a variety of procedural or political reasons. Of these, Belgium, France, Italy, and the Netherlands are expected to ratify NATO enlargement eventually. Serious problems could arise in Turkey and Greece.

Belgium is not likely to cause a problem. However, ratification may take a long time due to a variety of procedural issues in the parliament. While unlikely, regional assemblies may demand to be involved in the decision with regards to any budgetary impact of enlargement. Additionally, a 2/3 majority is required in each house of parliament where there have been increasing doubts about the merits of NATO enlargement.

France's ratification will be complicated by elections in the spring of 1998 which are likely to dramatize all parliamentary debates. In particular, the role of the European Union (EU), NATO command structure reform, and the Chirac policy of rapprochement with NATO could be linked to the ratification debate in France. Official French backing for Romania joining the first round of enlargement may also become a source of parliamentary debate if Romania does not have a clear perspective towards membership. Costs will be a particular concern for a budget under strain from France's European Monetary Union (EMU) commitments and high unemployment.

Italy could pose procedural delays. Parliament is likely to place a high value on a stable relationship with Russia as well as the status of Slovenia. Cost issues are likely to be a major source of debate as well. While there is a complicated governing coalition, there is nonetheless general support for the goals of NATO enlargement.

The Netherlands presents difficulties for procedural and political reasons. Any accession protocol will likely be examined by the Council of Ministers before it can be signed by the head of state. Once submitted to parliament, internal procedures could delay the process. NATO enlargement is a lively issue in Parliament where the costs, military implications, impact on Russia, and questions over whether likely new members have adequate civil-military relations or can pay their share of the costs of membership are major areas of concern. Moreover, the current three party ruling coalition includes the conservatives, of whom leading officials have signaled strong opposition to enlargement and insist that enlargement proceed in a way that enhances stability and does not undermine relations with Russia.

Turkey has consistently stated that it can not support NATO enlargement in the absence of a clear prospect for Turkish membership in the EU. The government may eventually support enlargement but maintains that it will not be ratified in parliament absent compensation from the United States or the EU. Turkey also has concerns over changes in the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty and NATO-Russia relations. Additionally, a weak governing coalition in Turkey may make internal debate contentious and protracted.

Greece is not likely to reject NATO enlargement on its own merit. However, the timing and success of Greek approval could be linked to processes ongoing in the Turkish government and parliament. If

Turkey is perceived as having been given sweeteners for its vote on NATO enlargement that are to Greece's detriment, then enlargement may face a serious problem in the Greek parliament. Additionally, debate over costs and sensitivities to the Russian position on enlargement could impact the ratification schedule.

Potential Problem Areas for Ratification

In all NATO parliaments, a number of issues are likely to emerge as major points of concern, including:

Russia's relationship with NATO will be of paramount concern to all NATO parliaments. While NATO enlargement is likely to proceed independently of NATO-Russia Charter developments, this perspective may not translate so easily into parliamentary debates. Indeed, the status of NATO-Russian relations will likely be of key interest in the U.S. Senate particularly if coupled with arms control issues. Criticism from the U.S. Senate and elsewhere may come both from those who think that too much has been done to satisfy Russia and those who think that NATO has not gone far enough. If the debate is dominated by such arguments the ratification process itself could worsen the Western relationship with Russia. Additionally, Russian President Boris Yeltsin's plan, confirmed at the U.S.-Russia Helsinki Summit, to submit the agreed Charter to the Duma for ratification could complicate the entire NATO-Russia relationship. Finally, there is likely to be an effort by some Russians to make the NATO ratification process as difficult as possible for some Western parliaments.

Legal and Administrative Process to Achieve Ratification of NATO Enlargement

Country	Legislative Procedures	Est. Months	Potential Problem Areas
Belgium (II)	Government draft bill is submitted to Parliament with a 2/3 majority required in both houses.	6-12	Regional Assemblies may demand to be involved in decision due to budgetary impact. Parliamentary interest due to criticism.
Canada (I)	Government can approve. Debate is likely in Cabinet and Parliament first. Cabinet decides process. A simple majority, but non-binding, vote in both houses is likely.	2-5	Cost is major issue. Government may argue that aid should be redirected to cover major part of the costs in Ukraine due to immigrants. Future commitment to "open" regional politics (Quebec) could complicate process.
Denmark (I)	MFA prepares bill for Cabinet and State approval. Debated twice in Parliament with optional committee examination in between. Simple majority vote.	2-6	Parliament has debated issue (Feb 97) and supports expansion. Position of Baltics a major concern.
France (II)	Secretariat General prepares report for Council of State and draft law for National Assembly. Committees examine proposal before simple majority vote. Law is then voted on in Senate, where simple majority is also required.	6-9	NATO command structure rebuff an issue. March 1998 size parliamentary debates, particularly those on the EU. Strong support for Romania in first wave. Cost an issue. Changes to CFE Treaty could cause further delays.
Germany (I)	MFA prepares draft law in consultation with other Ministries. Cabinet approves law before submission to parliament. Simple majority vote in both houses required.	5-6	Cost will be a main issue due to EMU and unification. Sensitivity to Russia, CFE adjustments, Baltics, and Turkey. However, FDP partner is getting weaker.
Greece (III)	Draft legislation examined by ministries before cabinet and legislative scrutiny. Parliamentary vote in Plenary session. Majority or QMV vote—to be decided.	12	Costs a major concern. Worries over whether CFE covers Greek Armed Forces or benefits Turkey. Sympathetic or wants her to be able to agree to enlargement details. Turkey issue is also sensitive.
Iceland (I)	MFA proposes law to Government. Approval by President before Althing debates. Simple majority vote required.	1-3	Cost is main issue. Both Coalition parties favor NATO expansion.
Italy (II)	Draft legislation is approved by Ministries before submission to Council of Ministers. Debate in both houses, plus committee examination. Simple majority vote in each.	6-12	Timing depends on progress in EU capitals and U.S. Strategic issues are likely to be raised. Advocate of Slovenia. Complex left-of-center coalition ministers. Coalition PDS solidly back government party.
Luxembourg (I)	MFA draft law is approved by Council of State before FA Committee examines it. Vote in Chamber of Deputies and Council of State. Two-thirds vote in each required.	6-12	Coalition has 2/3 majority and endorsed NATO at start of term. Therefore ratification likely to be straightforward.

Netherlands (II)	Examination by Council of Ministers before signature. Once protocol returned by NATO, Council of State prepares report. Queen approves law before Parliament votes. Simple majority required in both houses.	12	Parliamentary issues likely to include costs, military imp Russia and contribution to be expected from new members. Includes conservatives (VVD), who may oppose it comes to a vote, which could destabilize the coalition.
Norway (I)	Approval could be given by King in Council, but more likely to be debated and approved in Storting first. Simple or 2/3 majority will depend on Storting.	3-12	No opposition to enlargement yet. But relationship with amendment are matters of close interest. Governing party has a majority over all other parties, but larger parties all favor
Portugal (I)	Higher Council for National Defense examines proposal. Cabinet agrees draft resolution for parliament. After one simple majority vote, President signs.	6	NATO Structural change a point of interest (IBERLANT). No significant concern.
Spain (I)	Council of State authorizes draft submission to Chamber of Deputies for debate and one simple majority vote.	3-6	New NATO Structure a point of concern. A majority of deputies expressed support for adaptation and enlargement. Ratification uncontroversial, despite small communist opposition.
Turkey (III)	Council of Ministers must approve signature. Puts forwards draft law to National Assembly. Committees examine law before Assembly votes. Simple majority required.	3-12	May balk without a firm promise of EU accession. CFE Flotilla and Greece are sensitive issues. Weak coalition means could be fractious. Under coalition protocol, Mrs. Ciller remains as leader in mid-1998.
United Kingdom (I)	Accession Protocols laid before Parliament for 28 days. If requested, the House of Commons will debate and vote. Simple majority required. House of Lords may decide to debate issue but a vote is unlikely.	2	Likely to press for budgetary implications of enlargement, detail, and for the obligations of new members to be spelled out (IMS). Majority of MPs of all parties favor enlargement in May 1997 are unlikely to affect ratification.
United States (II)	President submits request to Senate. Foreign Relations Committee holds hearings before vote. Two thirds majority required.	4-8	Controversial. Senate elections may require completion to be delayed by arms control negotiations with Russia. Invited states will also require hearings to gain support for funding.

Key:

(I) Countries where ratification is likely to be straightforward.

(II) Countries where ratification may undergo difficulty.

(III) Countries where serious ratification problems could occur.

Cost estimates for NATO enlargement have contributed to a general confusion as to what NATO enlargement will actually cost taxpayers in NATO countries. Estimates range from a low-end U.S. Report to Congress on NATO Enlargement estimating \$27-35 billion over 12 years, to a Congressional Budget Office study forecasting costs as high as \$120 billion. It is unclear how the cost debate will emerge in parliaments because getting a clear understanding of the costs can only be attained during the actual accession negotiations. Nonetheless, it is possible that European governments may raise a "reverse burdensharing" issue if they are asked to pay a higher proportionate price for enlargement than the United States. Parliaments may question allocating resources for Central and Eastern Europe when their own domestic entitlement programs are being cut dramatically. Moreover, NATO parliamentarians are likely to question the degree to which new members can afford the costs of their commitment to collective defense in NATO.

A League of Nations Syndrome-in which the United States builds up a security system for Europe and then walks away from it. This is a major concern among Europeans over NATO enlargement. While it is highly unlikely, the level of concern in Europe over the strength of the transatlantic relationship will in many ways be measured by the pace and tone of the American debate over enlargement.

The presentation of accession protocols by governments to their parliaments could also affect the pace of the ratification process in the NATO member states. In particular, it will likely be easier to approve several states as a package than to vote state-by-state. A state-by-state vote raises the chances that a given parliament may approve some invitees but reject others. A rejection of one or more states could send dangerous signals to the remaining membership aspirants. Moreover, if Romania and Slovenia are not invited, or there is not a clear prospect for their eventual membership in NATO, France and Italy may

have ratification difficulties.

Failed suitors, those countries which aspire to join NATO but are not likely to receive membership for the foreseeable future, could pose a special problem for some NATO parliaments. Any implication that the first wave of enlargement will be the last may raise substantial concerns in Denmark and Canada in particular. Of special interest will be the status of the three Baltic countries-Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania-where it will be important to emphasize the open door provided by the enhanced Partnership for Peace program and the Atlantic Partnership Council. Also, institutions such as the EU and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe each make important contributions to European security and stability and will continue to play a key role for NATO and non-NATO countries alike.

Recommendations

Several steps increase the likelihood of ratification by April 1999.

- Support for NATO enlargement by the U.S. Senate should come early and often. A formal Senate resolution of bipartisan support of the decisions made at the Madrid Summit-shortly after the summit-would send a positive signal to the other NATO parliaments.
- Have a clear goal for completion of accession negotiations between NATO and the invitees, perhaps by December 1997.
- Coordinate concerted efforts in cooperation with the North Atlantic Assembly-NATO's interparliamentary organization-to assure ratification in other NATO countries.
- Use cases where parliaments have gone on the record in support of NATO enlargementCas has been done in the U.S. Congress and in the Danish Parliament-to create momentum in the ratification process.
- Focus high level attention on the accession protocols to prevent extraneous issues from affecting ratification in Turkey and Greece.

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